

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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Should a Christian Protest?

We cannot escape the conclusion that the same teaching of Jesus and his apostles which commands abstinence from violence also teaches that we can have no part in protest against authority. It is part of the same logic of our faith. Protest — in any cause — is an act of assertiveness: it is incompatible with discipleship. However peaceable one's protest might be, however passive the demonstration, however humble the approach to those in authority, one's stance as a protester is that of a plaintiff who seeks to petition his lords and masters.

Those who petition are claiming the right to make a demand of worldly authority; the disciple, on the other hand, discounts his earthly citizenship (Phil 3:20) and makes no claim upon those who govern him; even less does he demand something that those in authority have decided not to allow. Although the disciple of Christ, in common with others, receives the benefits which the state confers and is grateful for these, he neither expects nor demands them.

Harry Tennant, Christ and Protest

Editorial

Preaching the Gospel

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1Cor 9:14).

“Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Titus 1:11).

Paid ministers

It is a fact, it must be admitted, that the current culture of our community frowns on any idea of a paid ministry. It is so ingrained that, for example, when the group known as the CGAF was in talks (still ongoing) to join with the Central Christadelphians, the very fact they had a “paid” minister fifty years ago was quite a problem to some, although it was not ultimately addressed in the doctrinal agreements that were made. It must also be admitted that John Thomas was very fond of citing the passage from Titus above, as he inveigled against his contemporary ministerial colleagues, accusing them of putting the importance of maintaining an income over searching for the Truth. And when ministers of one denomination or another joined the Christadelphians in the nineteenth century, it was hard for them to find employment, and impossible to employ them in their previous profession. So much so that Robert Roberts employed some of them as assistant editors.

However, John Carter said many years ago “As a community we have no paid ministry in order that we may be free from the evils that Titus had to contend with. But we should remember that we have no right to demand unpaid service. The Lord did demand service from the great, but those who were served had a responsibility. Paul said, *‘The Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel’* (1Cor 9:14), and so to the Galatians he commanded that *‘those who are taught must share all the blessings of life with those who teach them the Word’* (Gal 6:6, Moffatt). Just as a Master provides the keep for his slave, so the brethren ought to provide for their servants.”¹

There are many passages that talk about the rights of those who spend their time preaching to be compensated for the effort, and very few that warn against the danger. For example:

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1Tim 5:17-18).

Another quotation from Paul is perhaps appropriate: *“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat”* (2Thess 3:10). The converse was true: where work for the truth demanded a great deal of time which could not then be spent on remunerative employment, it had

to be paid for by someone in the first century community — either by the ecclesia, by a rich brother or sister whose contributions Paul valued, or by the worker himself, who then spent time, energy and substance. The principle is as true today as it was then: if a brother (or sister) is asked to spend time in work for the Truth, and by so doing deprive themselves of gainful employment, consideration ought to be given for recompensing them. Much work in our community is, of course, quite voluntary, but we cannot really expect someone to reduce themselves to penury on our behalf.

In fact, our community provides for the employment, or at least covers the living expenses, of quite a number of its members in one capacity or another, including a large number of those in the mission field.

Unpaid service

In most of our ecclesias, the vast bulk of the work required is freely performed by its members. Whether it is speaking from the platform, presiding, cleaning the hall, preparing the meals, rarely are our members compensated. Thus the work of the ecclesia is spread quite widely, and we indeed are thereby knit together into the one body. *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (1Cor 12:12).* In most of our ecclesias, the passive seat occupier is quite rare, and all contribute according to their abilities, with their time being given quite freely, and many of the minor expenses of the ecclesias being taken care of also.

Given the typical size of our ecclesias, this is almost a necessity. Very few ecclesias in North America number in excess of a hundred or so, and so for the most part we would be unable to afford a paid minister even if we wanted the same. Thus the needed work is spread around, and many perform Bible Study that they would not perhaps otherwise engage in, if they did not have to give regular exhortations, Bible study classes, and lectures.

Service that ought to be recompensed

Commonly in the UK, ecclesias will invite visiting speakers for a Sunday, to deliver exhortations, lectures, or both. And in the areas with the greater density of ecclesias, it is very common to invited speakers to deliver the mid-week Bible classes also. This results in many ecclesias having more than half their appointments covered by outside speakers — while their own brethren are away speaking. Many such brethren find they are away at least one Sunday in two from their own ecclesias, with three in four sometimes being the case. All this use of invited speakers has caused much discussion in the pages of *The Christadelphian*, and there is a clear consensus that when visitors travel any significant distance, their expenses ought to be covered. Not only that, but the recommended way this is to be handled is to give the speaker his expenses, without either waiting to be asked or asking about the expenses. If the speaker feels comfortable paying his own expenses, he can put the re-imbursement into the collection, or contribute them to a Christadelphian charity he supports if he feels the ecclesia has no difficulty affording the amount of money involved.

It might be that and ecclesia finds it difficult to afford such expenses, but would still like to be able to hear outside speakers. They should, in these circumstances, broadcast a general request for such help, explaining the circumstances — but not invite someone and say “by the way, I am sorry we cannot pay your expenses”. In such cases, you are relying on the fact many brethren, even if they can ill afford such expenses, will be too embarrassed to acknowledge it.

I believe such a practice ought to be universal in this continent also, although it is much less common to invite brethren to travel significant distances to speak at regular meetings of the ecclesia.

Bible Schools and other special gatherings

Such occasions are usually noted, at least in North America, by the presence of speaking brethren from other areas, sometimes from quite a distance. After all, *“A prophet [speaker] is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house”* (Mark 6:4). Some Bible Schools even seem to have a tradition of inviting speakers from three different continents — North America, the UK, and a brother from the Southern Hemisphere. So it is not surprising that the travel of those brethren from other continents is almost always reimbursed, often with several Bible Schools sharing the expenses. And of course the cost of the Bible Schools is also covered, and commonly the costs of a spouse are covered also.

This is not surprising, as the preparation work required to be able to deliver up to twelve high class talks (adults and teens) and usually at least two other addresses is enormous. The time required can easily run into several hundred hours, all of which quite willingly and freely given. But it is sometimes the case that domestic speakers, although having the costs of the Bible School covered, have many other expenses that are overlooked. Whether it be the costs of copying, the incidental expenses in gathering material, or the costs of travel to and from the Bible School, sometimes none of these are considered by the inviting school or weekend. This ought not to be. If a speaker has to come any distance (and this is almost always the case), at least the cost of the car mileage should be automatically given to the speaker — and not just the cost of gas, but some approximation to the Federal mileage rate. Air fares, hotels, it is the least we can do. And he should at least be asked about any other costs consequential to his efforts, and this in a matter that invites an honest response.

If the organizers cannot afford such costs, perhaps they should consider the rational in inviting speakers from a distance. We all like to hear fresh voices, or those who are well known among the community, but to do so should neither beggar the organizers nor the speakers.

Of course this does not prevent the speaker from refusing to accept the expenses, or returning them in the collection. However, care must be taken to ensure that the one giving the service does not feel obligated in any way to meet his own costs, for any gift to the ecclesia, or other gathering, must be given *“not grudgingly, or of necessity”* (2Cor 9:7).

“Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?” (1Cor 9:7)

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian*: 1943, p 62.

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Exhortation

The River of Eden

The early chapters of Genesis tell us how the world got to be the way it is. And woven into the accounts of God’s creative work are details that may strike us as odd. When the Spirit takes up 5 verses of this tight narrative to tell us about what happened to the river after it left the garden, it may be useful to ask: Why do we need to know this?

Of course, the obvious answer is, so we can know where the garden was. But seriously, I’ve seen several different analyses of this question based on the four rivers listed in Genesis 2, with basically three different conclusions. The garden was in:

- The Tigris-Euphrates delta in lower Babylonia
- The highlands of central Turkey where the Tigris and Euphrates headwaters are very close
- Jerusalem.

There has been so much written on this subject, with so little truly satisfying evidence, that I think it’s not really a useful question at this point. By way of illustrating the difficulty, I’ll just observe that the Genesis account describes the river dividing into four courses downstream of the garden. This is the kind of thing that happens in a river delta: the Nile delta is famous for its “seven streams”, and the Tigris-Euphrates delta has similar features. But one of the four rivers, Hiddekel, is mentioned in relation to Assyria, which is far north of the delta. I think we have lost too much information over the centuries to understand this passage in a geographical sense. Nor do I believe the Scripture would have given so much space to this matter if it were simply about location.

Purpose of the river

So let’s look at this passage from a different angle. What is described in Genesis 2 is, first of all, a river to water the garden: let us understand clearly that the purpose of the river is to water the garden. It is the provision of God, given to ensure that everything in the garden would live and thrive under the man’s care. So, then, why do we need to know what happened to this river after it left the garden?

God who set up the garden also is the creator of the whole earth. He established the garden as a place for the man, who He created for dominion over the whole earth. The garden was not an end in itself: the careful description of the four rivers reminds us that the rest of God's creation also needed water. By His provision there was one source of water for the garden; it was more than adequate for the garden itself, so what remained watered a great portion of the land outside the garden.

In this great excess of God's provision were lessons for Adam as well as for us. **First**, God's provision for Adam and for the garden far exceeded anything needed for the purpose: He is not stingy provider, nor inclined to short-change us in our needs. **Second**, His generosity is not limited to those who are in His special care: "... *yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table*" (Matt 15:27). So the river, when it had done its job watering the garden, was given to the lands outside the garden, to bring life there as well. The presence of the garden was of benefit to the parts of the world nearby, since the overflow of God's blessing fell on them. **Third**, Adam, looking out from the garden, would see a world not yet under his dominion, but fertile and promising: a world with dangers, a world untamed, but not lifeless or unrelentingly hostile. These same parts of the world were kept ready by God's blessing for the dominion of man, the more easily to be incorporated into the garden since they were already watered and fertile.

Expanding that last thought a bit, consider Adam's role in the garden. His assignment was "*to tend and keep it.*" This too was of God's provision. And, as the man's abilities grew, he too would find he could do more than what God had told him to do: he could extend his care to the well-watered lands outside the garden. He was not assigned to do this, not directly, but if he knew of the four rivers, he would certainly understand the lesson: God does more than He really has to do; and He means for us to be like Him. And He meant from the beginning that man's dominion should extend over the whole of the earth. So the four rivers pointed in the direction man might follow, caring for a portion of the earth outside the garden.

One reason to think this is a good way to understand the passage is the mention of the treasures of Havilah. This appears to be a reference to the land later called Arabia. No one seems to know what bdellium is, but gold and onyx are used in the High Priest's vestments. That is, items useful for the service of Yahweh. It is these that would come under the dominion of Adam were he to extend his care to the lands watered by the four rivers. That is, there are good things, things suitable for the service of God, outside the garden.

Adam was commanded to take care of the garden; and it would have been wrong for him to leave that task undone while seeking further dominion. But the divine commentary shows the potential advantage in expanding the garden when he should be able to do so. Again, there is nothing in Genesis 2 that directs Adam to do any such thing; but it does seem implicit in the record and in the overall purpose of God in making man.

The pattern we have seen is consistent with God's later revelation. In the Bible we see many instances of God's provision for His special people or special place overflowing to the benefit of the world outside.

The river as a symbol

To use the symbol, in the days of Moses the river of the garden flowed with deliverance when God led His people out of Egypt: It flowed also to a mixed multitude of people who came with them.

In the days of Joshua the son of Nun, the river of the garden flowed with promises fulfilled for God's people: It flowed also to Rahab, who received her promise from the two spies, and to the Gibeonites, who won a promise by deceit.

The river of the garden flowed redemption in the days of Boaz, the son of Salmon; it did not stop at the borders of the holy people, but went out also to redeem Ruth.

In the days of our Lord, the river flowed with the gospel of the Kingdom of God. It flowed first with the preaching of one man, then with 12, then with 70. It flowed through Galilee, then Judea; and it was not unknown outside those territories. The Syro-Phoenician woman came to him, the Roman centurion came to him, and certain Greek pilgrims approached his disciples at the end. The river flowed more abundantly after his resurrection, when 3000 answered the call to salvation in one day. It dispersed abroad, bringing life to the world. It gushed forth in Samaria, broke through in the household of Cornelius, and overflowed all its banks in the preaching of Paul and Barnabas and Silas.

The effect of this surplus of God's provision has been, time and again, not only to nourish and strengthen the garden, but to expand it by calling out of the nations people who would join themselves to the name of Yahweh. But there is more.

In the days of Jonah, the river of God flowed repentance and mercy for the people of Israel, but they did not respond. It flowed also to the men of Nineveh, who did respond and were spared. So the lands downstream can benefit from the provision of God even when the keepers of the garden do not. This happened again when the Jewish nation turned away the gospel of the kingdom: the river flowed on, and divided to all the gentiles as at this day. And it is certain that even where the gospel is poorly understood and the Father's will not obeyed, even in those wild lands outside the garden, the river has brought fertility and prosperity.

But the Jews, to whom the gospel came first, sought to dam up the flow — and they have as a result been left desolate, a desert. The prophets are emphatic in declaring Israel will be restored, that all her streams will be filled once more with the blessings of her God. In the kingdom, in the day when the gospel of the kingdom is fulfilled, Israel will once more be the garden of God.

The last Adam

No longer will Adam tend that garden, but the last Adam — a life-giving spirit. The river will flow out from below his throne. Zechariah says half the water will flow westward to the Mediterranean Sea and half will flow eastward to the Dead Sea; Ezekiel says it will render the Dead Sea a living sea, where fishermen will take their catch. And as true as this may be in the literal sense, surely it foretells the spirit of the day when the prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled.

“Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold,

I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field will honor Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I give waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My people, My chosen. This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise” (Isa 43:18-21).

This is the time he foretells, when God will provide once more the waters of life for His people; and He will provide it in such abundance that the wild animals of the desert can share in it. And of course, following the figure, all the gentiles will enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom. The effect of this provision of God is declared very plainly by Ezekiel:

“Thus says the Lord GOD: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it” (Ezek 36:33-36).

Remember the people I mentioned earlier: the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with Moses, Rahab and the Gibeonites, and Ruth. In all these instances, people who were not part of the holy nation responded to the blessings they found flowing out of Eden. They looked upstream, as it were, to find God the source, and joined themselves to Israel. Micah foretells a time when this will be widely practiced:

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Mic 4:1-2).

All this serves to cheer us as we look forward to the Lord’s coming. Until that day we continue under his care, sustained by the same gospel of the kingdom, by the same instruction in the ways of God that he taught so long ago, and by this remembrance in bread and wine. This is more than a meager sustenance: even today the river flows through this place with such depth and volume as to make this garden fertile and beautiful under the care of our Lord the gardener; and surely our God even today provides so much more than is needed here, to bless our neighbors and our communities around us. Let the gospel go forth liberally as we have been blessed; and let us pray for our neighbors that they also might recognize the blessings of that river and look upstream to find its source, our Father, and to become part of His garden.

Jim Seagoe (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

First Principles

Fellowship Practice According to the Scriptures (1)

Our common understanding of Scripturally-based first principle doctrines is essential for us being united into a single fellowship community, to the honor and glory of our heavenly Father. We have many resources that review these Biblical first principles: e.g., *Elpis Israel*, *Christendom Astray*, *A Declaration of the Truth Revealed in the Bible*, *The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith*, *Studies in the Statement of Faith*, and *What are the First Principles*. Along with these common doctrinal beliefs, it is also necessary that we have a shared understanding of Scripturally-based fellowship practice.

This is the first of two articles in which we review Biblical principles of fellowship. We base the outline of our thoughts on Paul's call to unity:

*"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope** of your calling; **One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:1-6).*

We arrange our comments on these seven unities in the following sequence:

1. One God and Father of all.
2. One body.
3. One Lord.
4. One faith.
5. One baptism.
6. One hope of your calling.
7. One spirit.

We discuss these positive affirmations of unity, together with some contrasting implications.

1. One God and Father of all

The basis of the first and greatest commandment, to love the LORD thy God, is that there is only one God (Deut 6:4-5; Mark 12:28-31; Mal 2:10; Eph 4:6; 1Tim 2:5), which excludes the existence of other gods and the worship of such (Exod 20:2-3; Deut 5:7; 6:14; Isa 43:11; 44:6, 8; 45:5-6, 21; 1Cor 8:5-6). This first of all principles is the starting point for God's teaching on fellowship.

Basis for inclusion of the Gentiles. For example, it is the heart of Paul's argument for the Gentiles being included in God's covenant family:

"Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gen-

tiles also: Seeing it is **one God**, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith” (Rom 3:29-30; cf. Eph 2:11-13, 16, 18).

“How ye turned to God from idols to serve **the living and true God**” (1Thess 1:9).

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For **there is one God**, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity” (1Tim 2:3-7).

Being the only true God, Yahweh is the source of unity, thereby implying that He has only one fellowship family.

The fellowship of God’s light. True Biblical fellowship means walking in God’s light:

“That which we [i.e., the apostles] have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have **fellowship** with us: and truly our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ... This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is **light**, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have **fellowship** with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the **light**, as he is in the **light**, we have **fellowship** one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1John 1:3, 5-7).

These verses indicate that the apostolic fellowship into which we have been invited is with the Father, His son Jesus Christ, and our brothers and sisters. Further, they tell us that this fellowship exists in light. God is light, as are those He sends into the world to do His work: Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5; cf. 1:4-9) and so are his disciples (Matt 5:14). Each of these emissaries shines forth the gospel light (2Cor 4:4-6; Rev 21:23; Matt 5:14-16; 13:43; Phil 2:15-16; Dan 12:2-3).

To be in fellowship we must walk in the light (1John 1:7), that is, we must live our lives ever conscious of God’s Word, which is light: “**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path... The entrance of thy words giveth light**” (Psa 119:105, 130); “For the commandment is **a lamp**; and the law is **light**; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Prov 6:23). This light exposes evil:

“And this is the condemnation, that **light** is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than **light**, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the **light**, neither cometh to the **light**, lest his deeds should be reproofed. But he that doeth truth cometh to the **light**, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:19-21).

Being in fellowship means our sins are exposed. If we hide in the darkness, it proves we are liars, only **pretending** to be in His fellowship. If on the other hand, we confess our sins to Him, then He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, through Jesus Christ, our advocate, the propitiation for our sins (1John 1:8-2:2). This is an essential aspect of true fellowship.

There is no darkness in God, so those in His fellowship must have no fellowship with darkness: *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light... and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness”* (Eph 5:8, 11). *“What communion hath light with darkness?”* (2Cor 6:14). *“Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night or of darkness”* (1Thess 5:5). Being in the Truth imposes constraints on who we fellowship. We must continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and prayers (Acts 2:42). We must behave in ways consistent with our claim to be in the fellowship of the Father, the Son, and one another.

The fellowship of God’s love. Fellowship with God, with Christ, and with our brothers and sisters are intricately intertwined. You cannot have one without the others. John highlights these interconnections in his exhortation on love (1John 4:7-5:3):

- God’s love toward us is evident because He sent His only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him.
- God loved us, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- God loved us, so we ought to love one another.
- If we love one another, God dwells in us, and we in God.
- You lie if you say you love God and hate your brother.
- If you love God then you love your brother.
- If you love God then you love the one who is begotten of God.
- We love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments.

There is no such thing as an individual believer’s fellowship with God and Christ apart from that believer’s fellowship with their brothers and sisters.

There is one God and Father of all, and He has only one covenant family. God is light and He expects those in His fellowship to walk in light and to avoid darkness. Our lives are to be guided by the light of His word, which exposes evil and provokes us to confess our sins, for which He has provided propitiation through the blood of His son. Fellowship with God includes fellowship with His son and with our brothers and sisters. God, His son, and believers make up a community of mutual love.

2. One body

We break this section into the following three topics: ecclesial membership; ecclesial autonomy; and a community of ecclesias.

Ecclesial membership. Paul emphasizes that in Christ we form one body, each member belonging to the others: *“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others”* (Rom 12:4-5 NIV). We are one body because we all partake of the one bread which represents the sacrificial body of Christ: *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are*

all partakers of that one bread” (1Cor 10:16-17). These passages apply to each ecclesia individually and also to all ecclesias collectively. In Christ, we all belong to the one body, we are all part of the one family of God, members of the one Church of God. Having a common set of beliefs is necessary, but not sufficient: we must also belong to the same community.

Being many members, we are nevertheless one body, without division:

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit... That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1Cor 12:12-13, 25-27).

This metaphor of a human body emphasizes the corporate responsibility of each individual follower of Christ, who is identified with a community of believers, the body of Christ: we are many members, all in one body.

In fact, we are called into that one body:

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col 3:15-17).

We are called not only as individuals, but also into a community, the one body, the body of Christ. Being part of a community, we are to teach and admonish one another, and to worship together.

On the other hand, those who go out from us are no longer of us; that is, by going out they have left the one body:

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1John 2:18-19).

Those who go out from us are not of us, otherwise they would have continued with us. Their going out from us proves they are not of us. Christ's body has a crisp boundary; it does not have fuzzy outlines nor is it the intersection of overlapping circles. The message from Scripture is clear: the true fellowship community is represented as the body, the whole body, and nothing but the body.

“The inescapable conclusion... is that where the One Faith exists in two disjunct

[or distinct] communities, one of them for certain is not the One Body because the Unity of the Body has been severed and maintained in this sad state by deliberate choice and decision.”¹

Ecclesial autonomy. Central Christadelphians have repeatedly stressed the importance of ecclesial independence.² The basis for this insistence comes from the Bible.

Jesus gives step-by-step instructions on the process for dealing with offenses (Matt 18:15-20). The whole chapter (Matt 18) emphasizes that the goal is restoration. The first step is a private conversation, with the hope that he hears you and you have gained your brother. If he doesn't hear you, then you take two or three witnesses, so every word may be established. If sadly he refuses to hear them, then you take it to the ecclesia. Hopefully, he will hear it, but if not, then, and only then, do you treat him as a heathen and publican. The ecclesia's decision is treated as final: *“Whatever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven... For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* At every step the goal is recovery. We highly recommend the article “Jesus' Instruction for the Ecclesia in Matthew” by Bro. Tim Young for an excellent exposition and discussion of this important passage.³

The process Jesus describes follows the pattern set out by God in the Old Testament. In particular, investigation of sin and reports of sin must necessarily be carried out locally:

- *“thou shalt enquire, and search, and ask diligently”* (Deut 13:14; 17:4, 9).
- *“at the mouth of two or three witnesses”* (Deut 17:6; 19:15; Matt 18:16; 2Cor 13:1-2; 1Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28).
- *“So shalt thou put evil away from the midst of thee”* (Deut. 13:5; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 22:21; 24:7); compare, *“I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, [etc.]... with such an one no not to eat... Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person”* (1Cor 5:11, 13).
- *“All Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you”* (Deut 13:11; 17:12-13; 19:20; 21:21; 31:12-13); compare, *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”* (1Tim 5:20).

The importance of the local ecclesia in disciplining its own members is implicit throughout the New Testament. Paul wrote to many ecclesias (Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians) and their leaders (Timothy, Titus). Even Jesus, in the Apocalypse, wrote to the seven ecclesias and their leaders. In each of these cases the ecclesia was responsible for correcting its members. Whether for their false doctrines or their ungodly behavior, the ecclesia was expected to take corrective action with respect to some of its members. If these ecclesias failed to take the recommended actions, appropriate sanctions would be taken by Paul or Jesus when they arrived. In all cases, the intention is to gain the brother or sister, to save the one who is lost; and also to protect those who remain.

On the other hand, the ecclesia is the believer's immediate spiritual family, and as such provides an oasis from the world, a place for healing and building up. Consequently, we must not forsake assembling together; we must receive one another; we must help one another, especially the least of Christ's brothers and sisters:

- ***“Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb 10:24-25; cf. Col 3:15-17 cited above).***
- ***“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Rom 15:7). “We... ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth” (3John 8).***
- ***“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me... Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me” (Matt 25:40, 45).***

The authority of the ecclesia explains why the New Testament places so much emphasis on the local leadership of the ecclesia:

- Bishops (*episkopos*): Phil 1:1; 1Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9
- Deacons: Phil 1:1; 1Tim 3:8-13
- Elders (*presbuteros*): Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1Pet 5:1-5
- Those who rule over you: 1Thess 5:12-13; Heb 13:7

Qualified local leaders are essential because they oversee ecclesial affairs. We commonly call our ecclesial leaders arranging or serving brethren. Arranging boards are servants to their ecclesias; they play a critical role in the spiritual health of their members.

The importance of local leadership also explains the warnings concerning itinerant preachers:

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist... Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2John 7, 9-11; see also Matt 24:5; Acts 20:29; Gal 2:12; 1Thess 5:21; 2Pet 2:1; 1John 4:1-3).

Each ecclesia has responsibilities to its members and its fellow ecclesias. Ecclesias are responsible for their members: (a) disciplining sinners that they might repent, be forgiven, and ultimately be saved in the day of the Lord, and (b) protecting the rest of the ecclesia. First century cases requiring ecclesial discipline include the following examples:

- Walking disorderly, that is, working not at all:
“Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us... For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he

eat... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2Thess 3:6, 10, 14-15).

- Sexual immorality (1Cor 5:1-8): **“to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord”** (v5); and the consequent restoration (2Cor 2:6-8).
- Committing blasphemy: *“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1Tim 1:19-20).*
- Teaching things they ought not:

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1Tim 6:3-5).

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Titus 1:10-11).

- Causing divisions:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom 16:17-18).

“A man that is an heretick [i.e., divisive] after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself” (Titus 3:10-11).

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church” (3John 9-10).

Again, we emphasize that these issues must be dealt with locally.

“As long as the weak brother with off-beat ideas continues in the fellowship of sounder brethren there is some hope that by degrees he will achieve a more balanced point of view... But the necessary condition must be observed, ‘not to doubtful disputations’ [Rom 14:1]. If such a problem individual is to continue to share the blessings of the community, he must be prepared to cease all forms of propagation of the ideas he has espoused.

Only on these eminently reasonable terms can his membership of the family of Christ be tolerated.”⁴

A community of ecclesias. For multiple issues, Paul argues that there should be common practices “in all ecclesias”:

- “For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, **as I teach every where in every church**” (1Cor 4:17); “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And **so ordain I in all churches**” (1Cor 7:17); “But if any man seem to be contentious, **we have no such custom, neither the churches of God**” (1Cor 11:16); “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, **as in all churches of the saints**” (1Cor 14:33).
- “For ye, brethren, became followers of **the churches of God** which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus” (1Thess 2:14); “So that we ourselves glory in you in **the churches of God** for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure” (2Thess 1:4).

He also encourages the exchange of letters to Colossae and Laodicea (Col 4:16), presumably because each letter would apply to the other. The letter to the Galatians was explicitly sent to the ecclesias in that region (Gal 1:2). These exhortations were likely the initial reason for the early collections of Paul’s epistles; even though the letters were originally targeted at particular situations in particular ecclesias, they contained information relevant to all ecclesias, because all ecclesias were to share common practices.

Similarly, Jesus instructs believers to listen to his exhortations to all the ecclesias: “He that hath an ear to hear, **let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches**” (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you **these things in the churches**” (Rev 22:16).

This compilation of Bible passages describes a community of ecclesias, a community having common practices. Exceptions to the general community standards must be kept to a minimum; if not limited to truly unique and exceptional cases, then unity will be at risk.

Paul refers to the general ecclesia of God:

- “Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to **the church of God**” (1Cor 10:32); “despise ye **the church of God?**” (1Cor 11:22); “God hath set some in **the church**, first apostles, secondarily prophets, etc.” (1Cor 12:28).
- “I persecuted **the church**” (1Cor 15:9; cf. Gal 1:13; Php 3:6).
- “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to **the church**” (Eph 1:22); “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by **the church** the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10); “Unto him be glory in **the church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph 3:21).
- “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou ought to behave thyself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground**

of the truth" (1Tim 3:15).

- "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of **the church** will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb 2:12; Psalms 22:22); "to **the general assembly and church of the firstborn**, which is written in heaven" (Heb 12:23).

Again, the implication is of a fellowship community beyond that of the local ecclesia.

Having grown to its current size through multiple reunions around the world, and through active preaching missions, Central Christadelphian ecclesias collectively form the largest such community today. Bro. Harry Tennant summarized the constraints on ecclesial autonomy arising from our participation in this larger community: "We have responsibilities to our brethren elsewhere since we claim their fellowship and wish to exercise ours in their midst. We cannot therefore claim autonomy without also bearing responsibility. We should not seek to exercise the one without the other."⁵

Section 41 of the *Ecclesial Guide* gives excellent practical advice on inter-ecclesia relations: "Involved in another Ecclesia's trouble... The simple law of Christ, to do to others as we would be done by [Matt 7:12], will greatly help us to take the right and wholesome course" (*Ecclesial Guide*, §41). See the whole section for Bro. Roberts' application of this principle to every step in the process. In general, the *Ecclesial Guide* summarizes Scriptural principles applied to fellowship practice. These have served the Central community well for over a century.

There is one body of believers. We are many members belonging to one another. Those who go out from this body exclude themselves from fellowship. The true fellowship community is represented as the body, the whole body, and nothing but the body. Membership in an ecclesia is essential. Our ecclesia is our spiritual home, providing encouragement always and discipline when necessary. The New Testament emphasizes the authority of the local ecclesia and the critical role played by our arranging boards. It also talks of a community of ecclesias with common practices; the Central Fellowship is the largest such community today. Our ecclesias are to govern themselves freely subject to the limits imposed by our common shared understanding of first principle doctrines as revealed in the Scriptures, of which the BASF gives a true definition.

3. One Lord

In all things concerning the ecclesia, both local and universal, we must always remember that Christ is the head. He is the source of our salvation. We are members of his body. We are subject to him. We are to grow into a maturity matching his. In short, we are sharing in his fellowship:

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of

water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph 5:23-32).

“And he is the head of the body, the church... Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Col 1:18, 24).

We are indeed blessed beyond measure by this wonderful mystery of Christ and us his body, especially when it involves sharing in his sufferings. We must ever be mindful that Christ is the head of our fellowship community. He is our Lord; we belong to him.

There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the head of the body. He is our master; we belong to him. He is the source of our salvation. He loved the ecclesia and gave himself for it. We are subject to him and his commandments. He is our example and we are expected to reflect his life in our lives. It is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us.

4. One faith

God’s Word uses a variety of phrases to describe the one faith:

*“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of **the common salvation**, that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith which was once delivered unto the saints**” (Jude 3).*

*“To Titus, mine own son after **the common faith**: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 1:4).*

*“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).*

*“But speak thou the things which become **sound doctrine**” (Titus 2:1; cf. 1Tim 1:10; 2Tim 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13).*

The pastoral letters have a series of faithful sayings, which appear to be quotations from a first century statement of faith:⁶

*“**This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance**, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1Tim 1:15).*

*“**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance**. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is*

*the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe. **These things command and teach***" (1Tim 4:9-11).

***"It is a faithful saying:** For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him"* (2Tim 2:11).

***"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly,** that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. **These things are good and profitable unto men**"* (Titus 3:8).

For over a century the Central Community has used the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASF) as our primary summary of the first principles of Bible truth.⁷ Other equivalent summaries are acceptable too, especially nowadays when English is not the first language of many of our brothers and sisters.

The fact that there is one faith, the common faith, the gospel of Christ, which is sound doctrine, implies that all others are false gospels, not to be condoned:

*"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive **another spirit**, which ye have not received, or **another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him"* (2Cor 11:3-4).

*"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach **any other gospel** unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"* (Gal 1:6-9).

By exhorting us to exclude false doctrines and their teachers, Scriptures teach us to practice "closed fellowship." Here is a brief summary of the Biblical phrases used to describe this important doctrine:

- Unbelievers: have no fellowship, be ye separate, touch not (2Cor 6:14-17).
- Another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel: be not beguiled or corrupted, receive not, accept not, bear not (2Cor 11:3-4).
- Preachers of another gospel, perverting the gospel of Christ: let them be accursed (Gal 1:6-9).
- Teachers of other things, deceivers: withdraw, stop their mouths (Titus 1:10-11).
- Heretics (i.e., those who are divisive): reject (Titus 3:10).
- False prophets: try (1John 4:1-3).
- Any who bring not this doctrine: bid not God speed (2John 10-11).

Observing closed fellowship practices when we meet around the memorial table of our Lord is one way in which we obey the Scriptural principles just cited, that instruct us to separate ourselves from false doctrine. A group of people sharing the symbolic emblems of Christ in a formal setting signifies publicly and privately

a unified purpose. We are bound together in our mutually agreed consensus to believe and teach the same essential doctrines we call “first principles”. We avoid associating with beliefs and teachings that are wrong and dangerous to our salvation and to the salvation of our families and friends. This principle guides our personal conduct and our ecclesial conduct. It is the understanding that all our fellow ecclesias are seeking to uphold the same principles that binds us together in our worldwide fellowship community. “Each ecclesia is free to govern its own affairs up to the limits set forth in the scriptural principles summarized in our BASE, to which we have all given our willing assent.”⁸

There is one faith, the gospel, which is sound doctrine. All other gospels are false, which are to be rejected together with their teachers. We are to practice “closed fellowship,” restricting our community and our fellowship to those who share our common understanding of the first principle doctrines as revealed in the Scriptures.

5. One baptism

This section and the next [see next month] discuss our participation in God’s family. Those who are baptized into Christ become adopted children of God:

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant... when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son... To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal 3:26-4:7).

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Rom 6:3-4; 8:14-17).

It is this family that delineates those who are in fellowship, those who are the children of God, those who are members of the body of Christ, those who partake of the bread and wine, those who are heirs with Christ of the promises.

This is the reason we call ourselves “Christadelphians”, that is, “brethren in Christ”. Through baptism we become “faithful **brethren in Christ**” (Col 1:2):

*“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [i.e., one family]: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them **brethren**, Saying, I will declare thy name unto **my brethren**, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me” (Heb 2:10-13).*

See also the many places in Acts and the epistles where believers are addressed as “**brethren**”.

There is one baptism. We are baptized into Christ, and by doing so become members of God’s family, heirs according to the promises. God is our Father, we are His children, and Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren. This is why we call ourselves “Christadelphians”, which being interpreted means “Brethren in Christ”. This family defines those who are in our fellowship community, those who are members of the one body of Christ, and those who partake of the bread and wine, the tokens of Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf.

(To be concluded)

The Tidings Publishing Committee

Notes:

1. Bro. Harry Whittaker, “Block Disfellowship – Is it Taught in the Bible,” *Testimony*, 1973, p. 342.
2. See “Fellowship Practice of Central Ecclesias,” *Tidings*, December, 2008, pp. 534-535, for relevant citations from the *Ecclesial Guide* and *The Christadelphian* magazine.
3. *Tidings*, March-April, 2011, pp. 125-131, or <http://tidings.org/PE> [the capital PE is necessary].
4. Bro. Harry Whittaker, “Block Disfellowship,” *Testimony*, 1973, p. 344.
5. *The Christadelphian*, May 2006, p. 164.
6. For more information on the faithful sayings, please see “Faithful Sayings,” chapter 13.06 of *Bible Studies: An Anthology*, by Bro. Harry Whittaker, and “The ‘Sayings of Faith’ in the Pastoral Letters,” chapter 7 of *What are the First Principles?*, by Bro. George Booker.
7. See “Fellowship Practice of Central Ecclesias,” *Tidings*, December, 2008, for relevant citations from the UK Central-Suffolk Street Final Statement (p. 527), the Australian Unity Agreement (pp. 527-528), and the North American Berean-Central Jersey City Resolution (p. 530).
8. Bro. Ken Sommerville, *The Christadelphian*, June 2006, p. 204.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14)

Jesus lived through the whole range of human experience from birth to death, not as something external and dispensable as the Gnostics taught, but as the essence of divine truth. Human life was the means by which God chose to manifest Himself in His supreme revelation to men.

Sheila Harris

Bible Study

Creation's Gospel (10) Knowledge Will Increase

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased"
(Dan. 12:4).

The dramatic increase in global knowledge and travel we are experiencing was prophesied over 2½ millennia ago. These are two of the signs of the times confirming the confidence of the enlightened in the approaching fruition of divine promises. It is curious how apostate Christianity has postponed these societal advantages for so long, by obstinately refusing to recognize the scientific truths of divine testimony.

The circle of the Earth

Poor Galileo was tortured by apostate Christian leaders, violently encouraged to renounce the inescapable conclusions of his scientific research. His astrophysical research and mathematics made the self-worshipping presumptions of the apostate Christian scientists of his day appear quite foolish. Not only was the earth round and not flat, the universe did not revolve around the earth but the earth revolved around the sun. Every form of false worship places oneself at the center of their self-glorifying universe. Every form of false doctrine degrades the Creator and exalts men in their own eyes, without exception. The politically powerful and wealthy don't appreciate lessons in humility. Yet anyone who could read the Bible would know that the earth was round and not flat. *"Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers"* (Isa 40:21-22). From the divine perspective (from any angle) Earth is a circle, therefore a globe. Anyone claiming the earth was flat would be declaring the Creator to be a liar or a fool. When science (the study of the features of creation) can finally stumble past the impediment of doctrinal distortions that contradict how creation projects divine truths, mankind always benefits. Science will always be at variance with apostate Christianity, because true science will only confirm divine truths and principles which exclusively glorify our Creator.

Draining away 'life' to heal?

Phlebotomy (draining blood) was practiced by supposedly Bible believing doctors of medicine for centuries for its supposedly healing benefits. George Washington, the first American President, had a dangerous amount of blood drained from him the last day of his life to resolve a horribly agitated throat. The Bible states perfectly clearly that the life of a person is in their blood (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23). What intelligent mind, claiming to respect the Bible, could possibly conclude it

would be a healthy procedure to drain away their life in order to heal a diseased condition? Obviously this respected medical practice offered no respect for divine testimony concerning the features of creation. When doctors of science finally stumble onto divine truths, even oblivious of their spiritual implications, the benefits to mankind abound. Fortunately, science finally caught up to the testimony of the creator concerning the ignorance of draining away life blood in order to extend life. The spiritual lesson of the blood mirrors the creational features of the blood. Those who disrespect this relationship will always suffer for it.

The contagious nature of physical uncleanness and sin

Isn't it strange that men claiming to be Bible believers would not wash their hands between hospital surgeries? They either did not read the Bibles they supposedly believed, or had no respect whatsoever for divine testimony. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries doctors finally began to scrub between surgeries. All of a sudden the death rate at hospitals plummeted. God's laws made it perfectly clear that uncleanness (the physical effects of sin nature) is passed by touch (Lev 15; Hag 2:10-14). By the terms of the curse of sin and death, physical uncleanness was contagious. Whatever came in physical contact with an unclean person not only became unclean but became an uncleanness host...in the exact same way that disease is passed by touch. This condition resulted from the introduction of sin into a previously *very good* creative order (before the introduction of disease and death, as there were no contradictions to the Creator's right-ness... yet). Under the laws of the Kingdom of God an unclean person sitting on a saddle made that saddle unclean. Anyone touching that saddle prior to its cleansing became automatically unclean and anything they touched became unclean, just like disease. Interestingly, no one becomes healthy by touch and health is not contagious. However, everyone can become sick by touch. Although holiness can be achieved by touch it was not contagious. Whatever came in direct physical contact with the altar of burnt offering or the flesh of the sin offering became automatically holy (Exod 29:37; Lev 6:27). This law prophesied of how our Messiah (shadowed in the altar and sin offering) could reverse an unclean condition (leprosy, death, bodily issue) by his touch. Indirect contact meant nothing. God emphasizes this point through Haggai so that it should have been difficult for believers to miss (Hag 2:10-14). Despite this divine spotlight, 'Christian' scientists and doctors were oblivious to this creational principle until the microscope was invented. Lo and behold there were microscopic disease carriers being transferred by touch whose contagious transference could be halted by cleansing. Huffing and puffing, science finally caught up to a very basic lesson of divine law, about 3,000 years late.

A severe warning for missing the point

Emphasizing the significance of cleansing ourselves from an unclean physical condition was the severe divine judgment against anyone disrespecting this issue of physical uncleanness. If anyone refused to cleanse themselves from an uncleanness issue the community was instructed to ostracize that person forever, without any recourse of return (Num 19:13,20). While it does seem quite difficult to miss the divinely appointed significance of cleansing oneself following the touching of the

dead or a person with a bodily issue (etc.) it was millennia after these divine communications were given to men that mankind stumbled upon the scientific principle of the contagiousness of physical uncleanness and disease. Society still benefits even when the divine principles of creation are only viewed from a scientific perspective, oblivious to the truly meaningful testimony.

Although there is a great deal more we can consider under this theme, we will leave it for your meditational ‘cud-chewing’, moving on in our next commentary to a brief review of Dr. Mario Livio’s most recent book: **Is God a Mathematician**.

Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH)

The People of the Bible

Christians are faced with problems of meaning when they come to the Bible. God’s Word came in particular places, at particular times, to particular people. It is only as we stand in those people’s shoes and understand what God was saying to them that the words can have full meaning for us. Part of standing in their shoes is to understand the language in which the revelation came. This has been made possible for most Christians through the work of Bible translations.

The other aspect of standing in the shoes of Biblical people involves gaining a feel for what the terminology refers to. We can get such a feeling by placing ourselves back into the context of the Bible era’s homes, countrysides, and marketplaces...

The lifestyle of the people has also been recorded in words and artifacts, in pictures, and even in the rubbish of the past. It is through the study of such sources that it is possible to recapture something of how things were in Bible times.

The people of the Bible may have been conservative in attitude, but there was a richness and variation in their culture. Within the so-called Fertile Crescent, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, there was great variety. Life for the poor was not the same as life for the wealthy; life in the hot valley of the river Jordan was different from life in the cool mountains surrounding Jerusalem; life in summer was different from life in winter; life for the nomadic herdsman differed from life for an urban tradesman; and in a land that was subject to continual warfare, life was different under the occupation of the Assyrians from life under the occupation of Greeks and Romans.

Ralph Gower,

The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times, p. 8

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Many Years, Many Lives

Bro. Duncan Sabean began teaching in the Meriden Sunday School in 1989, the year after he and Sis. Diane moved to Connecticut. Sis. Diane joined the Sunday school staff a year or two later. After teaching separate classes for a while, they joined forces and team taught for many more years. They have taught middle schoolers. They have taught beginning readers. Most recently they have won the hearts of our littlest children who flock around them with great admiration. Sunday school teaching has been a career occupation for them.



Bro. Duncan and Sis. Diane announced their retirement from teaching this year, and, at our end-of-year Sunday School Open House it all happened quite spontaneously: their former and present students who were in attendance rallied round for a group photograph. Included in the picture are two mothers with their children. One couple in the picture are engaged to be married. Also included are three young sisters who will, God willing, start their own careers as full-time Sunday school teachers next year.

When we teach the children, we don't just teach a curriculum. We teach who we are as disciples of Christ. Eight of the eighteen students in the picture are now brothers and sisters in the ecclesia. The eagerness with which they joined together for the photograph tells its own story of who our brother and sister are and who they have been as teachers in the Sunday school.

It occurs to me that the "Teacher's Prayer" is a fitting complement to this brief tribute:

*"I want to teach my students how to walk in God's pure way,
To live a life acceptable throughout each precious day;
Not just to learn the names of kings or how the crowds were fed,
But how to trust God's Holy Word wherever they may tread.
To understand eternal truth and God's great love to man,
To look to Jesus as their friend, and learn of God's great plan.
For if these nurtured ones do grow in wisdom and in grace,
Then I shall feel that I have tried to humbly fill my place.
And so I ask your guidance, God, that I may do my part,
To teach these precious jewels of Thine to love Thee with all their heart."*

The author of this poem is unknown, but each dedicated Sunday school teacher rewrites its meaning in his or her own life.

Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)

Notice

Do you have a Sunday school story to share?

I am looking for Sunday school stories to share in the pages of The Tidings Magazine. The stories can be about:

- a dedicated Sunday school teacher, past or present
- an exceptional Sunday school student, discretely identified or not identified at all
- a neat student project or service idea
- a teaching insight / an effective teaching strategy
- a successful Sunday school activity or extra-curricular activity
- how an ecclesia has reached out to neighborhood children
- someone who found the truth through the Sunday school
- the biggest challenge I ever faced in Sunday school
- the most amazing Sunday school class I ever had
- the best Sunday school lesson I ever learned ... or taught
- a great Sunday school program that we did
- smiley answers that kids have given to Sunday school questions
- etc.

If you have a story like this or know someone who has, please take a minute to let me know. I can follow up on it. Stories like these highlight the personal nature of our Sunday school work and are great to share. They make enjoyable reading and can give hard working Sunday school teachers fresh ideas and much needed encouragement.

You can contact me in any of the following ways. Thanks.

Bro. Jim Harper, Section Editor, The Joy of Sunday Schooling. sundayschool@tidings.org. (Apt. 14D, 145 Harbor Pond Drive, Meriden, CT 06450-3461, USA. Phone: 203-630-0210)

Reflections

Marriage Proverbs: Guidelines for a Happy Relationship.

(9) Guideline # 8: “All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children” (Isa 54:13 ESV).

In deciding to have children a couple must realize this is not something to be taken lightly, because how we raise our offspring may have eternal consequences. The Apostle Paul made it clear to the Ephesians that having children is a great responsibility that needs to be handled with care. Consider again the advice that was given: “*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*” (Eph. 6:4 ESV¹) Several important concepts are in this passage, which can be brought to focus in three key words: anger, discipline and instruction. Let’s consider each of these in turn.

Anger

The apostle’s advice is obviously aimed in this instance at the parents. It is almost impossible to raise children without conflict arising at one time or another. Conflict in child rearing invariably will lead to considerable unhappiness in the marriage relationship. When I was a young man I once mentioned to an elder brother that my wife and I wanted to have lots of children. He smiled and said he prayed that God would bless that wish, but if we were going to have children it would be wise to avoid having teenagers! The teenage years indeed proved to be the most difficult in raising our own children. It is a time when children are seeking to establish their own identity and also striving for independence. It is equally a time when the parents worry most about a number of things going too far too fast. The famous author, Mark Twain, told the story about how he was totally at odds with his father as a teenager until eventually he ran off to San Francisco, some 2400 miles from his family home in Connecticut. While there he started writing for a newspaper and as his skills as a writer grew he became fairly famous. At 21 years of age he decided to move back home and live with his parents while he tried his hand at being a full time independent author. On doing so his local friends were amazed and asked how he could possibly live home again given all the conflict with his father that caused him to run off to California some years earlier. To this Mark Twain supposedly replied: “*When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished by how much he’d learned in seven years.*”²

This story brings out an important point about parenting, namely, try to do the best job you can and while your child may not always appreciate it at the time — there is a strong possibility that someday they will.

Discipline

Now the challenge in child rearing is how to avoid frustration, anger, or simply losing one's *cool* while at the same time maintaining discipline. We have already discussed in a previous essay that corporal punishment could get parents in conflict with the law in many nations. Also, I suggest that it doesn't find accord with the gentleness displayed by Christ with regard to dealing with little children (see Matt 18:3, Matt 19:14 or Mark 10:14). In light of the teachings of Jesus, and of the apostle Paul, invoking Prov 23:13,14 as a justification for corporal punishment of children by parents makes as much sense as using Exod 21:23-25 (or Deut 19:21) to rationalize *an eye for an eye*, etc., as the kind of behavior we would find acceptable today. However, that doesn't mean a child should be brought up without firm discipline. A spoiled child is no honor either to their parents or to our heavenly Father. *"A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him"* (Prov. 17:25 see also Prov. 10, 15:20).

In a happy marriage both parents will agree that firm discipline coupled with love is critical to good child rearing. Below are some suggestions on how to apply firm discipline without resorting to any sort of physically abusive behavior. This not only has the potential of teaching a child that conflict is only resolvable by force, but also harbors the possibility that in the long term the child will grow to resent his or her parents. In observing a number of families, over the years, I have found that physical punishment by parents, especially if carried into the teenage years, has oft-times led to the rejection of the Truth when the child reached adulthood.

Here are some simple suggestions for applying firm, but loving discipline:

1. Parents should never discipline a child when they have lost emotional control themselves. Take a deep breath and count to ten before taking any action.
2. "Timeouts" are an effective way of limiting a conflict situation. Have the child stop playing (or whatever else they are doing) and tell them they need to sit quietly with the parent (or in a designated time-out place) until they have calmed down.
3. Limit privileges: this works at most ages. It can vary all the way from a youngster not playing with their toys for a period of time, to limiting a teenager's driving privileges.
4. Most disciplinary actions might be unnecessary if the child has a firm idea of the behavior expected of them in the first place. Teaching in advance the limits of behavior, and the consequences that will happen if not followed, puts the parent in control.
5. Set up a reward system for good behavior. If a child is told they can have ice cream (or play later with their friends, or whatever extra reward the parent can dream up) if they clean their room — the chances are they will clean their room with a minimum of fuss.
6. Give a child the reasons for the bounds set for the behavior expected. One possible scenario might go something like this: *If you drive too fast you become a traffic hazard and you endanger your life. We love you too much to see you harmed.*

7. In a happy marriage the husband and wife don't let the child play off one parent against the other. Parents need to be unified in their approach to discipline.

Using sarcasm and teasing as disciplinary tools are both inappropriate. They are neither funny nor kind, especially when dealing with children. They teach that those are acceptable forms of communication and behavior instead of plainly spoken honesty.

Obviously, these suggestions are not meant to be comprehensive. One could write a whole book on child discipline and indeed many have been authored. However, no better instruction manual has ever been written than the Bible. Parents who are guided by the Word in dealing with their children in a firm loving way will, without doubt, be more successful in bringing up their children than if they applied whatever is the latest fashion in child rearing philosophy currently circulating in the world.³ The salient point to remember here is that in a happy marriage both parents agree on the need and modes of discipline to be applied in every circumstance and above all they don't let the child play off one parent against another — a point that cannot be overemphasized. If that happens it is certain to sooner, not later, create trouble in the marital relationship.

Instruction

Let us move on to the Apostle's third key word "instruction". The greatest responsibility thrust upon parents is to nurture their children so that they are set on a life path that will lead them to the kingdom. A verse that every parent should be familiar with is Prov 22:6: *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."* This thought is amplified in Psa 119:33 *"Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end."* (ESV) and Prov 6:20 *"My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching."* Young children are like a book with blank pages waiting to be written upon. Our Lord Jesus Christ emphasized this point when he said: *"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 19:14). As soon as children can articulate speech, parents should begin with including the Word of God as a teaching experience in every way possible.

Children can be more cognizant of what they observe in their parents behavior than what they are told to do. As they grow older they become all too quick to spot hypocrisy. If the parents are not respectful and loving towards each other it would be rare indeed for their children to be. When their parents faithfully attend Ecclesial functions, with unfeigned interest, their children will generally emulate such behavior. A home where the Word of God is a **daily** topic for reading and discussion is one that stands a good chance of producing children who will be engaged in the way of the Lord for their lifetimes. Speaking of the righteous the Psalmist says: *"...his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night"* (Psa 1:2). If one is fortunate enough to live in an Ecclesial area with a comprehensive Sunday school and an active CYC program the parents should certainly support it. They should also see that their children not only attend these functions, but the parents themselves need to be involved; not leaving the jobs of working with young people to be delegated solely to others to perform.

A question that has been often posed to me by parents is: How do I handle the controversy and divisiveness that sometimes raises its specter in our community, when my children become aware that such problems exist? Some parents feel they should protect their children by hiding, as best they can, any troubling Ecclesial issues. However, I have found this is probably not the best policy, because it underestimates the intelligence of our children. They will eventually find out that difficulties exist in Ecclesial life, and the last thing a parent wants is for their children to imagine they have been lied to, or have had facts hidden from them. Questions should be answered promptly, honestly and at a level the child can comprehend. How we treat each other as brothers and sisters during times of controversy speaks louder to the children, and to those around us, than anything else. Conflicts are inevitable, but the reaction we have to them is our choice.

Trust and problems

In a happy marriage the bond of absolute trust is an important part of the glue that cements the couple together. Similarly, contentment through trust is a bond that will knit together husband, wife and children as well into a happy family. The best policy is transparency; children should be made aware that *they should never confuse the 'Truth' with the people that happen to be in the Ecclesia*. The 'Truth' is from God, but we are still of the flesh and prone to sin. Being a Christadelphian does not in this present mortal state confer on us perfection. If our children are to grow up fully committed to the Ecclesial family they need to realize it is not *perfect*, because if it were we would not need redemption through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Children need to be prepared to stay the course and the best way to try to accomplish this goal is for their parents being steadfast. The words of the apostle Paul are particularly helpful in this regard: *"...he [Christ] has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister"* (Col 1:22-23).

Even in the happiest marriages, where apparently every good principle was carried out in raising children, one or more of the progeny may turn away from the Truth when they strike out independently on their own. Two things come to mind here — first don't give up in praying and tactfully doing your best to keep the light of truth shining when you are with them. One can never know what motivates the conscience of a person. I know of several cases where one sibling whole-heartedly accepted the Truth and faithfully lived it while another child of the same family walked away and apparently rejected the call to repentance. However, later in life, even after their parents had passed away, the prodigal child came back and accepted Christ and stayed committed till their demise. But even if a late in life acceptance is not the case, parents need to realize that even some of the most spiritual characters in the Scriptures were saddened by the behavior of their adult children. Eli is a case in point (1Sam 2:12-36) and Samuel is another example of a righteous man whose children failed to emulate their parent's righteous character: *"Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice"* (1Sam 8:3). As with Eli and Samuel disappointment in one

or more of our children may indeed be our trial too, but let it not affect a happy marriage by burdening it with guilt. A parent can only do so much; in the end judgment will be an individual matter (2Tim 4:8).

John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)

Notes:

1. All Bible References are from the ESV.
2. See <http://quoteinvestigator.com/2010/10/10/twain-father/>. This quote has always been attributed to Mark Twain, but since his father died when he was 11 years old either he said it in 'character' or he has received credit for almost 100 years for the work of some other clever, but unknown author.
3. Dr. Benjamin Spock authored the best selling child-rearing books that were very popular when we were raising our children. It has been much debated whether or not his seemingly permissive philosophy led to a whole generation of spoiled brats expecting instant gratification. (I never read any of his books — hence I have no personal opinion on the efficacy of his teachings.)

Forgiveness (7)

To a large extent, up till now these articles on forgiveness have focused on individuals and their relationships with one another. We have tried to give solid Bible-based counsel on the importance of forgiving those who have wronged us, as well as providing concrete advice on how to actually practice forgiveness, difficult as it is. We hope these ideas prove to be as helpful to our readers as they have been to us.

This final article looks at the issue of forgiveness on a bigger scale, cases where families or communities or nations need to forgive one another. We'll review several Bible examples, including Hezekiah's Passover, the unification of Judah and Israel, and the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles into God's covenant family through Jesus Christ. Then we'll draw some lessons from Desmond Tutu's book *No Future Without Forgiveness*. Finally, we'll close this article and the series with a prayer on behalf of the brotherhood.

Hezekiah's Passover

When Hezekiah determined to keep the Passover, he included all Israel and Judah; this fact is emphasized throughout the narrative (2Chr 30:1, 5, 10-11; 31:1).

This Passover became a festival filled with compromise. It was held in the second month (2Chr 30:2, 13, 15). Many in the congregation were not sanctified, having failed to cleanse themselves, especially those from the northern tribes, but they ate the feast anyway, contrary to the law (2Chron 30:17-18). They extended the feast an extra week, going beyond what the law called for (2Chron 30:23). Having shared the Passover together, everyone, including those from the north, returned to their own cities (2Chron 31:1).

Regardless, the spirit of the feast was acceptable to the LORD:

"Hezekiah prayed for the people, saying, The LORD pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the LORD hearkened unto Hezekiah, and healed the people" (2Chron 30:18-20).

Their hearts were in the right place, so God healed them and accepted their worship of Him. In fact, it was a wonderful experience for all, a Bible School extraordinaire:

“And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers” (2Chron 30:21-22).

We want to highlight the last item here (“*making confession to the LORD God of their fathers*”). The people came with the right attitude. They came with humility. Having their sins exposed, they confessed. There was great joy, and their prayers were heard by God:

“So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven” (2Chron 30:26-27).

What a wonderful scene. The disparity in the congregation was enormous, but there was unity of purpose — to celebrate the Passover, singing praise unto the LORD. Together they worshipped our heavenly Father in spirit and in truth, overlooking their diverse cultural backgrounds. In fact, they included those they knew were not clean. Instead of casting them out, Hezekiah prayed for them, asking God to pardon them. This is extreme inclusiveness.

Furthermore, there is evidence that the Psalms of the Sons of Korah (Psa 42-49; 84-85; 87-88), Psalm 89, and the Psalms of Asaph (Psa 50; 73-83) originated in the northern sanctuaries of Dan, Tabor, and Bethel, respectively, and that these psalms were adapted for use in Jerusalem.¹ It would take us too far afield of our topic to explore this claim in detail.² Suffice it to say that if it is indeed the case, then it provides another impressive example of inclusionary behavior on the part of the Jerusalem leaders to accommodate their northern brethren.³

Judah and Ephraim to be united

In the midst of the exile, the LORD commanded Ezekiel to act out a parable of two sticks (one representing Judah, the other Ephraim) becoming one:

“Take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand” (Ezek 37:15-17).

The meaning of the parable is clear: the two nations, Ephraim and Judah, would become one:

“Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand... I will make of them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel... they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more” (Ezek 37:19, 22).

In particular, they would dwell in the Promised Land, having one king and one shepherd:

“Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land... One king shall be king to them all... And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd... And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever” (Ezek 37:21, 22, 24-25).

At the heart of this unification is the renewal of God’s covenant with His people:

“Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God... they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them... Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezek 37:23-24, 26-28).

The exhortation for us is clear: if Yahweh is willing to rescue us from exile, we should be willing to unite with our siblings in His covenant family.

Jews and Gentiles in Christ

The first century ecclesia was stressed because in Christ, Jews and Gentiles had been called together into one united community:

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Eph 2:13-15).

This new covenant family was expected to worship God in harmony, with one voice. Following Christ, they were to be likeminded one toward another, having one mind and one mouth, receiving one another, Jews and Gentiles together glorifying God for His mercy:

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written [2Sam 22:50; Deut 32:43; Psa 117:1; Isa 11:10]” (Rom 15:5-12).

This was easier said than done because their cultures clashed, bringing severe conflict that regularly threatened the peace of the united community. For example, with respect to the kosher food laws and the annual calendar of Sabbaths, which way should it go? Should Gentile believers conform to Jewish standards, or should Jewish believers become apostate to their God-given law? If either of these extremes were required, the movement would almost certainly collapse in a war of opposing principles. Paul addresses the issue, exhorting against disputations, and instead insisting that everyone must be allowed to judge for themselves, fully persuaded in their own mind:

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks” (Rom 14:1-6).

Earlier in the letter, Paul warns his Gentile flock not to boast against their Jewish counterparts, and not to become high-minded in their new privileged status:

“For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

“Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which

is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? (Rom 11:16-24).

Paul explains God's plan to include both Jews and Gentiles:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom 11:25-32).

Again, the lesson for us is plain: we must not boast against our brothers and sisters who have come into the Truth through some path other than the one we have, and we must not be so high and mighty in our own status that we are cut off from the very thing we prize so much.

No Future Without Forgiveness

In 1984 Desmond Tutu received the Nobel Peace Prize for his "role as a unifying leader figure in the campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa." In its citation for selecting Tutu, the Nobel Committee writes:

*"The means by which this campaign is conducted is of vital importance for the whole of the continent of Africa and for the cause of peace in the world. Through the award of this year's Peace Prize, the Committee wishes to direct attention to the non-violent struggle for liberation to which Desmond Tutu belongs, a struggle in which black and white South Africans unite to bring their country out of conflict and crisis."*⁴

In 1995 President Nelson Mandela named Tutu as Chairman of South Africa's newly formed Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In 1999 Tutu wrote a book, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, recounting his experiences on the TRC:

"The establishment of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a pioneering international event. Never had any country sought to move forward from despotism to democracy both by exposing the atrocities committed in the past and achieving reconciliation with its former oppressors..."

"In No Future Without Forgiveness, Tutu argues that true reconciliation cannot be achieved by denying the past. But neither is it easy to reconcile when a nation 'looks the beast in the eye.' Rather than repeat platitudes about forgiveness, he presents a bold spirituality that recognizes the horrors

people can inflict upon one another, and yet retains a sense of idealism about reconciliation.”⁵

Tutu describes their approach, a third way between two unacceptable extremes:

“Our country’s negotiators rejected the two extremes and opted for a ‘third way,’ a compromise between the extreme of Nuremburg trials and blanket amnesty or national amnesia. And that third way was granting amnesty to individuals in exchange for a full disclosure relating to the crime for which amnesty was being sought. It was the carrot of possible freedom in exchange for truth and the stick was, for those already in jail, the prospect of lengthy prison sentences and, for those still free, the probability of arrest and prosecution and imprisonment.”⁶

He further explains the basis for this approach, a fundamental concept called *ubuntu*:

“...ultimately this third way of amnesty was consistent with... what we know in our languages as *ubuntu*... What is it that constrained so many to choose to forgive rather than to demand retribution, to be so magnanimous and ready to forgive rather than wreak revenge?

“*Ubuntu* is very difficult to render into Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say... ‘Hey, so-and-so has *ubuntu*.’ Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, ‘My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.’ We belong in a bundle of life. We say, ‘A person is a person through other persons.’ It is not, ‘I think therefore I am.’ It says rather: ‘I am human because I belong. I participate. I share.’ A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

“Harmony, friendliness, community are great goods. Social harmony is for us... the greatest good. Anything that subverts, that undermines this sought-after good, is to be avoided like the plague. Anger, resentment, lust for revenge, even success through aggressive competitiveness, are corrosive of this good. To forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest.”⁷

There is much wisdom here. If such spiritually-enlightened ideas can be used in a political-charged minefield like South Africa after apartheid, then how much more should we be able to apply them to our situation?

Closing prayer

We conclude this series on forgiveness with the following prayer on behalf of the brotherhood:

Father, forgive us as we forgive others.
 We have sinned and fallen short of Thy glory.
 Hear our prayer, O God. Have mercy upon us. Cleanse us. Wash away our sins. Remove our transgressions. Blot out all our iniquities.
 Bless us, O LORD. Keep us. Let Thy face shine upon us. Be gracious unto us and give us peace.
 Create in us a new heart.
 We beseech Thee to join these two sticks that they might become one, that we might be no more two, that we might no longer be divided. Unite us for Thy name's sake. Let Thy servant Jesus, even the shepherd of the sheep, be king over us. Let us walk together in Thy judgments and observe Thy statutes, and do them. Establish the everlasting covenant of peace with us.
 Heavenly Father, restore the glory to Thy tabernacle, even to the body of Thy dear Son, the fellowship of the saints in whom Thou dwell. Sanctify us. Make us holy even as Thou art holy.
 We thank Thee for Thy loving-kindness, O LORD. We thank Thee for Thy many wonderful works. We will not hide them. We will declare Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation, so that all peoples might praise Thee, O LORD, for Thy goodness.
 In the name of Christ our Savior, who has loved us, and has given himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to thee for a sweet-smelling aroma, in his name we pray.
 Amen.

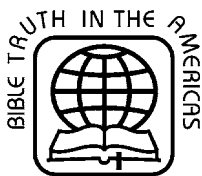
(Series concluded).

David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA) and Joe Hill (Austin, Leander, TX)

Notes:

1. Michael D. Goulder (1982) *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 20; Sheffield: JSOT Press)*; (1995) "Asaph's History of Israel (Elohist Press, Bethel, 725 BCE)," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament (JSOT)* 65, 71-81; (1996) *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter, III (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 233; Sheffield: JSOT Press)*.
2. Note the geographic allusions in Psalm 42:6-7 (Mount Hermon, the hill Mizar, and the headwaters of the Jordan River, all pointing to the sanctuary at Dan) and Psalm 89:12 (Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon); and the references to God's people as Israel, Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh (Psa 73:1; 76:1; 77:15; 78:5, 21, 31, 41, 55, 59, 71; 80:1, 2, 5; 81:8, 11, 13).
3. Compare how many non-Christadelphian hymns have been included in our hymn books, sometimes with adaptation to make them more suitable or more relevant to our needs.
4. http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/press.html
5. From the back cover of *No Future Without Forgiveness*, by Desmond Tutu.
6. *No Future Without Forgiveness*, p. 31.
7. *No Future Without Forgiveness*, p. 32.

"It is not at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered" (Bishop Butler).



Bible Mission News

More Baptisms in El Salvador

"Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14).



Bro. Nestor Garcia and Bro. Alex Anrade

Bro. Manuel and Sis. Silvia Fernández shared the following information. On June 24th the Christadelphians of El Salvador were delighted to witness the baptisms into Christ of two new brethren who meet with the Usulután Ecclesia. We were also very happy to have with us and carry out the baptisms Bro. Ed Binch, one of the brethren who periodically visit us from afar and encourage us to continue on the path to the kingdom.

The two new members are Alexander (Alex) Andrade and Néstor García. Néstor, a young man of 18, acquired his faith through his grandparents, Bro. Julio and Sis. Angélica García. Néstor has been attending the meeting since he was seven. Alex, 22 years old, came across the Truth in a somewhat novel way. He used to frequent a barber shop whose clients included several of the young brethren of the ecclesia, and so he couldn't help but hear them talking to the barber about different Bible topics and the growing ecclesia. The discussion caught Alex's attention and aroused his curiosity because from an early age he had attended an Evangelical church of which his grandfather was a pastor and his mother a member. When Alex began to mull over this new perspective on the Bible and to discover its true teachings, he decided that he should be attending the ecclesia, and before long he asked to study for baptism. Both young men gave a very good confession of their faith in their respective interviews.

A total of 33 persons, including seven relatives of Néstor, made the two-hour journey up to San Salvador from Usulután to witness the baptisms. Among them were the mothers of the new brethren; both very happy with the decisions their sons had taken; in fact Alex's mother has now begun to attend the Usulután Ecclesia along with him. Like the other young brethren and sisters in Usulután, Alex and Néstor are committed to reflecting the life and character of Jesus in order to attain eternal life. We thank God for this great blessing, seeing that He continues to take out a people for His name.

Yet two more young people have begun to study for baptism in Usulután. They are Wendy Carranza, 20, sister of Bro. Samael Carranza, and Johana Paola García, 18, granddaughter of Bro. Julio García. Both are enthusiastic Bible students and anxious to belong to the great family of the faith. We ask for all your prayers so that the servants of God may continue to multiply here in El Salvador.

The Usulután Ecclesia recently acquired its own property. Bre. Don Luff of Ontario and Douglas Hawthorne of Los Angeles were here in May to participate in the inauguration of the new hall. They also gave classes in the other two ecclesias in the country, Sonsonate and San Salvador. Their talks gave us much to reflect on regarding our spiritual life, and so we are very grateful to God for their visit.

The Usulután brethren and sisters have now instituted a regular Saturday CYC class. It is attended by many young people of the surrounding community, so that each week there is a group of about 12 students and six baptized brethren, who take turns giving the class. This has been a marvellous development, and in addition to attending the CYC class the young people have worked hard to repair and renovate the new premises for use by the ecclesia, which has given them a lot of satisfaction. Now the ecclesia has its own space for the edification of the body of Christ.

*For this is the will of God,
That by doing good you may put to silence
The ignorance of foolish men—
As free, yet not using liberty
As a cloak for vice,
But as bondservants of God.
Honor all people. Love the brotherhood.
Fear God. Honor the king.*

(1Peter 2:15-17)

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/C Publicity*

“Welcome to Jamaica — again!”

Checking in at the Toronto Airport for the flight to Jamaica, the airline agent informed me that my luggage was overweight by three kilos — I guess our scales at home are off a little! He told me there was a \$20 charge per kilo over, and then he asked me what was in the two suitcases. I explained that they contained Bible related books, booklets and study notes plus some children's books. He asked me if I was a “pastor” and I said “No — I am going to visit our churches in Jamaica and taking these supplies for them”. The agent proceeded to write a note in a small pad, tear out the page and insert it in my passport. He tagged the two cases, handed me my passport and boarding pass and said with a big smile, “May God bless you and have a good flight!” — so, I figured I better not ask any questions and get going! After I left the check-in counter, I read the note in my passport which said, “I’m also a Christian. Keep up the good work!”

Upon arrival in Jamaica, as usual, everyone had to clear customs and immigration. The agent reviewed my declaration card, and asked me about the purpose of my visit to Jamaica and what resort I was going to stay at. I explained that I was going to visit friends in their homes and attend some of our churches' activities on the Island. I then gave him the name and phone number of one of the families I was going to stay with. He swiped my passport and looking at the computer screen asked me if I had been to Jamaica before this year? I told him in February and May — I was starting to think that I was going to be asked to go into a little room somewhere for extra questions...! He then stamped both the passport and the declaration card, handed them back to me and with a big smile said — “Welcome to Jamaica — again!” I was getting the clear impression that this was going to be a good trip!

Our time in Jamaica was from July 18th to 25th. The first evening was spent with the Broughton Ecclesia around the study of the Book of Ruth. Ten sisters were in attendance, along with Bro. Patrick Johnson of the May Pen Ecclesia. He was helping with ecclesial activities, while the recording brother, Bro. Ray Arthurs, was recovering from detached retina surgery. The next day (July 19th) Bro. Patrick and I went to the Argyle Mountain Ecclesia for a Memorial Service — this was all part of the scheduled arrangements by the CBMJ. The normal attendance of six sisters and one brother welcomed us around the Table of the Lord. Bro. Siswe Stephen of this ecclesia and members of other ecclesias also visit the few members in isolation of the Norwood Ecclesia about 90 minutes from Argyle Mountain, as often as they can.



Back row: Bro. Patrick Johnson (May Pen Ecclesia), Sis. Maxine Thompson-Brown, her daughter Stephanese, Sis. Icyline Grant, Sis. Janetta Campbell

Front row : Sis. Vera Gordon and Sabrina Brown (another daughter of Sis. Maxine).

Friday and Saturday (July 20th and 21st) the Spanish Town Ecclesia held preaching activities each evening. The first evening's topic was "Wealth and Prosperity" — many churches stress tithing and that the result will be God's blessing of riches — but the lecture stressed the principle of "contentment", and giving not receiving (Acts 20:35). "The Kingdom of God on Earth" was the second evening's topic. Although the newspaper ad was published later than planned and less handbills were distributed than anticipated, a number of visitors attended both events. The response encouraged the members of Spanish Town to implement the plans earlier next time. One man named Horace (in his mid-50's) had attended "youth circle" (as he called it) up until he was eight years old at the former Lances Bay Ecclesia. His family moved and he lost contact with the Christadelphians. He is now in touch with Bro. Keith Kinlocke, recording brother of the Spanish Town Ecclesia. We ask for your prayers that after all these years Horace may come to know the Truth!

We enjoyed fellowship around the Lord's Table at the Kingston Ecclesia on Sunday, July 22nd — the theme of the exhortation was "The Eyes of the Lord". The meeting hall is very spacious, indicating a sizeable ecclesia in the past, but sadly, like most ecclesias in Jamaica, this ecclesia is smaller now, mainly due to emigration to other countries. Up to 12 members attend the Remembrance Service on a regular basis. In the evening of the same day, a special Bible Class was held at the May Pen Ecclesial Hall on the theme of "The Potter and the Clay" with good audience participation for the readings by adults and children alike!



Left to right: Coreen Thomas, Kay Brown (Broughton), Simone & James Samuels (their 2 sons in front), Garfield Carter, Davion Sinclair, Jennifer Kelly (in front of Davion), Neville Beckford and Judith Frazier (in front of Neville).

Brothers and sisters present Sunday, July 22 at Kingston Ecclesia. This was taken in front of the entrance doorway. Bro. Davion is the recording brother.

On Saturday, July 21st, a Sisters' Study Day took place in the Port Maria Ecclesial meeting room at Sister Dorothy Isaacs' home and close to 20 sisters were in attendance from six ecclesias. The theme for the day was "A Mother's Love" — studies on three mothers' relationships with their sons were presented — Jochebed and Moses; Rebekah and Jacob; and Mary and Jesus. Packages of the books, booklets and study notes (which were requested at the Mutual Improvement Day in May) were taken to this gathering, so that sisters could take them back to their home ecclesias for distribution — the Christadelphian courier service!

During Monday and Tuesday (July 23rd and 24th) we spent time with members of the Kingston, May Pen and Broughton Ecclesias — enjoying hospitality, good food and fellowship in their homes and around Bible study.

We do thank all the Jamaican brothers and sisters for their warmth and kindness during our stay. We were pleased at the order and protocol observed by the members during the different ecclesial meetings we attended.

CBMC representative, Don Luff

Our Heritage — The Caribbean



After a period of many years, Bro. Ashraf Ali, originally from the New Amsterdam Ecclesia in Guyana, and now a member of the Manhattan, New York Ecclesia, was blessed with the privilege to revisit ecclesias in Guyana, Trinidad, Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica, from June 23rd to July 10th. This is his account of the love and fellowship shared with our Caribbean brothers and sisters:

In exhortations we dealt with the Apostle Peter, a brother we can relate to, and how our Lord, the Master builder, worked on his weak character to make him into an unshakeable pillar and indefatigable worker in the early church. In Bible classes we demonstrated how John chapter 1:1 can have infinity of applications in the light of which the burgeoning Christadelphian interpretations of John's writing, especially the book of Revelation, should engender unity instead of conflict.

In Guyana I was euphorically happy to attend the New Amsterdam Memorial Service and to conduct Bible classes in New Amsterdam and Kilcoy. In Trinidad I had a refreshing stay with Bro. Sam's family and conducted a Bible class at Sam's house where meetings are kept. In Tobago we had a marathon session with the Memorial Service and Bible class on Sunday as we do in Manhattan.

I was happy to be in Barbados, the gem of the Caribbean, and the home of brethren and sisters to whom we will return, God willing, next year. There in Barbados we had a Bible Class at the Christadelphian Hall and in Jamaica we had a wonderful Memorial Service in the Kingston Hall. Many years ago we made the rounds of the ten ecclesias of Jamaica and we hope to repeat that feat through God's grace.

I would like to thank all our brethren, sisters and friends in our Lord Jesus Christ for a refreshing visit to the Caribbean. I was particularly impressed by the brethren and sisters of the Tobago Ecclesia. We had a lengthy Memorial Service, a very short break and then a lengthy Bible class. Throughout these activities we had the full attention of the entire congregation ranging from children to elderly brothers and sisters. Such a splendid day was well spent in the Lord's service!

We pray that the words of our Master in Revelation 3: 10 will apply to us and to the Caribbean Ecclesias as we strive for excellence in His service:

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the entire world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

If there are brothers and sisters in the Caribbean who would like a visit from brother Ashraf, please contact CBMC — Bro. Phil Snobelen (philsnobelen@shaw.ca).

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Have you read these *Tidings* books?

Bible and Science: Design vs. Chance

by John C. Bilello
The concept that the Universe, and all that is in it, came about by chance is counter to Bible teaching. God is the author of both the Bible and nature. \$13.34 US (Hardcover, 254 pages, 2005)

Essays to Believers

by Don Styles
A set of essays on practical Christian living and is suitable for individual meditation as well as group Bible study. \$8.00 US (208 pages, 2007)

My Journey in Faith

by Ronald P. Hicks
A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. \$10.00 US (372 pages, 2010)

How to Order

Online — www.tidings.org (Go to Books). E-mail — books@tidings.org. Mail — Tidings Books, 11659 Caves Road, Chesterland, OH 44026. Shipping & handling costs extra. Make checks payable to *The Christadelphian Tidings*.

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis

by David P. Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of chapters 1 to 5. \$12.00 US (364 pages, 2011)

The Whole Armor of God

by Ryan Mutter
This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today's young people. \$6.00 US (110 pages, 2011)

Understanding the Bible

by A.D. Norris
A classic Christadelphian book useful in preaching work, and especially suitable for those who want to learn to read the Bible effectively. \$5.00 (152 pages, 2007)

News & Notices

(Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month;
please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.)

BOSTON, MA

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Sis. Alicia Warner on August 6, 2012. She was eighty-two years old. She now rests peacefully, awaiting the Lord's call to life again at his return.

We would like to thank our Bro. Dan Wilkinson (Worcester, MA) for his recent exhortation on our behalf.

Jim Sullivan

CAMBRIDGE, ON

It is with great joy that we announce that on August 12, 2012, ROB COUSENS, son of our Bro. Gary and Sis. Amy Cousens, put on the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism. The ecclesia rejoiced along with his parents and grandparents in this happy occasion.

We also rejoiced in the June marriage of our Sis. Verity Cotterell to Bro. Joel Suntz (Hamilton McNab). We pray that the Lord will bless them as they walk together toward His glorious kingdom.

Additionally, our ecclesia has been blessed with the addition of several babies: David Caetano, born to Bro. Andy and Sis. Sharon; Jacob McKay, born to Bro. Steve and Sis. Cheryl; Lydia Abel, born to Bro. Johnnie and Sis. Beth; Joah Hale, born to Bro. Jochem and Sis. Emily; and Kendall Glen, born to Bro. Andy and Sis. Allison. Our ecclesia rejoices in these future additions to our Sunday school.

Since our last correspondence we have welcomed by transfer the following members to our ecclesia: Bro. Paul and Sis. Sue Brokaw from the Kitchener-Waterloo, ON Ecclesia; Bro. Philip and Sis. Sharon Krakar from the Brantford, ON Ecclesia; and Sis. Lesley Hagar from the Ottawa, ON Ecclesia. We pray these members will be strengthened together with us as we walk toward the kingdom of God.

We would like to thank the many brothers who have labored on our behalf over the past months with exhortations, lectures, Bible classes and, in particular, our Bro. Mike Robinson (Echo Lake, NJ) who spoke at our May study day. The undersigned has now assumed the duties of recording brother for the Cambridge Ecclesia. Ecclesial correspondence may continue to be directed to our ecclesial mailing address or by email to kurt.ruhland@gmail.com.

Kurt Ruhland

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We sorrow with our Bro. Sam Arabia and his family in the loss of his grandmother who was a member of the Advocate fellowship.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed them around the table of the Lord: Margan Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, and David and Maryann Jorgensen

(Union, NJ); Jeremy and Laura Morgan (Cardiff Museum Place, UK); David and Liz Perry (Washington DC); Tom and Sally Davis (Pomona, CA); Jean Drepaal (South Florida, FL); and Ashraf Ali (Manhattan, NY).

Stewart Marsden

GRANITE STATE, NH

We are very happy to announce the baptism of another of our Sunday school students. On July 28, 2012, TIM DIZEFALO, son of Bro. Roger and Sis. Gail DiZefalo put on the saving Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been very blessed as this is our third baptism this year! We pray that Yahweh will bless the walk of our new brother, keeping him in the way of salvation and bringing him into His kingdom. It is so encouraging to see the hand of God working in the lives of young people, touching their hearts with His love, and drawing them to Himself in the hope of salvation. May the day of the Lord soon come, that our hope in Christ be realized, and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

Steve Smith

HONESDALE, PA

We are sad to report that beloved Sis. Esther Dunn went to sleep in the Lord on August 1, 2012. She will be sorely missed but we hope to meet her in the kingdom of God. She was born in 1930 and was baptized in 1944. Bro. Jim Harper and Bro. David Stiles (Meriden, CT) conducted the services.

The angels rejoice at the baptism of BARBARA TERREL by Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) on August 12, 2012, at Welcome Lake, PA. Bro. Steve also gave us an excellent exhortation at our service, followed by our annual picnic put on by our fine cooking sisters. We were also glad to have many visitors, especially from the Moorestown Ecclesia.

Stephen DeMarco

ORLANDO, FL

With much sadness, we report that our dear Sis. Nancy Sanfilippo passed away on March 31st after a brief illness. Sis. Nancy was much loved by her large family and by her brothers and sisters in Christ. She will be sorely missed.

On a joyous note, Bro. Tommy and Sis. Natalie Sanfilippo were blessed with the birth of a baby boy, Joshua Ross Sanfilippo, on March 6, 2012. Joshua was the fourth grandchild of Sis. Nancy and Bro. Joe Sanfilippo. Joshua weighed eight pounds eight ounces! He has been a delight to all in our little ecclesia.

The following brothers and sisters attended our meeting over the last few months. Many thanks to those brothers who exhorted. Alan Markwith (Hamilton Book Road, ON); Alan and Sandra Walker (North Bay, ON), Sara Fallahi (Jacksonville, FL); Stephen and Betty Lou Lewis (Largo, FL); Roger DiZefalo (Granite State, NH); Julian and Sandra Baseley (Guildford, UK); John, Joanne and Jesse Andrew, and Tom and Vivian Thorp (Hamilton Greenaway, ON); Peter and Pat Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI).

Randy Davenport

SARASOTA, FL

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. The Sarasota ecclesia has been deeply saddened by the sudden falling asleep in Christ of our beloved Bro. Ron Badlu.

He was a wonderful, always cheerful brother with a great love for the brotherhood worldwide, a willingness to help those less fortunate, and a growing appreciation for God's word. He served this small ecclesia in several capacities, and his loss is keenly felt. May the great hope of the resurrection which we share strengthen us all in this time of sorrow. The sympathy of this ecclesia is extended to the Badlu family.

James L. Wilkinson

SUSSEX, NB

We are sorry to report the falling asleep on August 13, 2012, of Sis. Arla Easson following a struggle with cancer. Our sympathies are with Bro. Ron and their sons, Bre. Kenneth and Sis. Nipun, and Gordon Easson; and her brothers, Bre. Dennis and Theo Readman. We will miss her for her extensive Bible knowledge but look forward with hope to the day of resurrection.

The following brothers and sisters and families have visited us recently: Dale, Carol and David Crawford, Ken and Wendy Dickson, Michael Buxton-Carr and Steve Snobelen (Bedford, NS); Ken and Nipun Easson, Gordon Easson (Toronto East, ON); Theo and Joy Readman (North Battleford, SK); Josh and Amanda Robinson, (Kitchener Waterloo, ON).

Cliff Baines

TOLEDO, OH

It is with sorrow that we report the falling asleep in the Lord of Bro. Jim Quick. He died unexpectedly on Friday, August 31, 2012. Bro. Jim was a tireless worker in the truth, always enthusiastic, and confident in the soon return of our Lord.

We also would like to thank our recent visitors, and brothers who have encouraged us with words of exhortation: John and Jessie Brinkerhoff, John Bilello, Matt Bilello, and Ken Burcaw (all of Ann Arbor, MI). We also thank Sis. Mary Bilello for her assistance on the piano.

Bro. Ken Henzler recently had hip replacement surgery and is recovering nicely.

Doug Henzler

WORCESTER MA

Sadly, we must announce that our beloved Sis. Lucille Gifford has fallen asleep in the Lord at age ninety-six. She was a member of the body of Christ for over seventy-five years and was our ecclesial organist for thirty-five years. We look forward to seeing her again in the kingdom, Lord willing, and may He strengthen her family in this time of loss.

Gladly we are pleased to note the baptism of NAOMI THERIEN, daughter of Bro. Denis and Sis. Cindy Therien, into the saving grace of Christ. May the Lord bless her as we await Christ's return.

CAMP HASHAWHA FAMILY BIBLE STUDY WEEKEND

The Washington, D.C. ecclesia extends a loving invitation for all to attend our family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, Westminster, MD. The weekend is planned,

God willing, for November 23-25, 2012. Bro. Richard Morgan of the Book Road, Hamilton, ON ecclesia is scheduled to lead us in classes entitled “The Pattern of the Tabernacle”.

Bible classes for all ages will be held Saturday and Sunday beginning at 8:45am. A nursery for those four and under is available. Sports, daily readings, discussion group, an evening program and campfire hymn sing are planned for Saturday. Sunday School, Memorial Service and lunch complete the weekend on Sunday. Mail registrations to: Bro. David Fertig, 9703 Schmidt Drive, Burke, VA 22015. For forms or information, phone: 703-644-6311 or e-mail Bro. Dave at Hashawha@gmail.com.

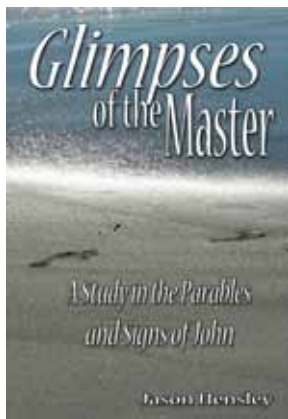
ECHO LAKE HELPING HANDS

On behalf of Echo Lake Helping Hands we would like to thank Southern New Hampshire Ecclesia for joining us in making no sew blankets for the Christadelphian Jewish Relief headed by Bro. and Sis. Griffin (UK), and collecting school supplies for the Christadelphian Save the Children Fund headed by Bro. and Sis. Birchall (Canada). We wish to thank Sis. Edith Machado for coordinating this effort, and the Union Ecclesia.

If any ecclesia would like to help in any way, please contact the following: Sis. Janet Owens at: 732-583-4184 or Marie Washington at: 732-381-4590

Stewart Marsden

GLIMPSES OF THE MASTER



This is a new book about the gospel of John by Jason Hensley. Throughout his gospel, the apostle only recorded eight major miracles performed by the Lord. Each of those miracles was written so that John's readers might be convinced of the messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, and in that belief come to him and find life (John 20:31).

This book was written to tell the story of those eight signs. It was written to make the narrative of John's gospel come alive, and then to go deeper into the symbolic, or parabolic meaning of each one of those miracles. In every case, the symbols of the sign come together to powerfully demonstrate that the Lord Jesus came to bring true life, and that this true life can only be found in him.

The book is now available from: the Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library; www.christadelphianlibrary.com; Amazon.com; and Amazon Kindle.

Jason Hensley

*I need not shout my faith. Thrice eloquent
Are quiet trees and the green, listening sod;
Hushed are the stars, whose power is never spent;
The hills are mute: yet, how they speak of God!*

Charles Towne

Minute Meditation

Seek First the Kingdom

The daughter of one of our employees was a contestant recently in the Miss America Beauty Pageant. She placed, but the third runner up for Miss California does not receive a crown. Only the winner is crowned.

As we write this article, the summer Olympics have just finished in London, England. It is an interesting fact that London is the only city to have had three Olympics in its history. The stark reality that all those hundreds of participating athletes had to face is that in the Olympics just the top three winners are given medals, and only one wins the gold.

The Olympics in Paul's day were also well known; they had been celebrated every four years for hundreds of years, and would be held for many more centuries. Only the winner was recognized, as Paul points out, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." The Olympic winners in Paul's day were given a crown of leaves to wear, a crown that would wither and fade in time. Like the crown, the memory of who those winners were has also largely faded.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul compares his race to the kingdom with an athlete competing in a race: "Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

Think of the thousands of athletes that have trained, often for years, just to compete in Olympic Games. They certainly can say that they did not run aimlessly but that they trained their bodies to compete for the prize they sought. Many gold medals were awarded in the various sports, and just like the runners in Paul's day, only one in each event got the top prize. A few milliseconds often can be the difference between top honors and bitter disappointment.

How different the Olympics are compared to the race that we are engaged in. Every one of us is a participant in the race for eternal life, and it is God's good pleasure to give all of us the greatest prize ever offered to mankind. We all can be winners. God actually wants each of us to be in His kingdom. He wants us to live forever. The prize will not fade, and we will not be forgotten.

If we are not accepted, it certainly won't be His fault, nor the fault of His Son who gave his life so that we could be there. As Jesus tells us: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Peter confirms the words of Jesus when he explains, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward,

not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” As incredible as it may seem, our Lord God, the almighty Creator of heaven and earth, wants us to be saved and live eternally, and has made vast preparations for us to succeed and to be in His kingdom, which He has prepared for those that love Him.

Sadly, those who will be rejected at the return of His Son from heaven will be those who did not actually want to be in the Kingdom: that is, they did not want it badly enough to give it top priority. There will be something in their lives that they have wanted more than the kingdom. If the kingdom is not first in our life, it makes no difference where it ranks because we will not be granted admittance unless it is absolutely first. Certainly we have needs — food, clothing, homes, and other things, but Jesus tell us to seek first the kingdom of God and then all these other things will be added unto us.

Have we considered what takes up our time each day — the things of the world or the things of the kingdom? Jesus did not say that we should not serve both God and mammon. He said that we cannot. It is a sobering exercise to keep a log of our activities and consider the number of minutes we devote each day to serving our God. We make it obvious what we truly love to be doing because that is what we do with our free time. What are we saying about our priorities when we choose our activities?

Serving our God and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, cannot play second fiddle to our other interests, and they know clearly right now where we have ranked serving them in our everyday lives. Let each of us resolve to put the kingdom first in our thinking and in our doing.

How thankful we are that our Heavenly Father and His Son want us in the kingdom. All we have to do is make sure that our goal is the same as theirs and make seeking the kingdom of God first in our lives. We pray that we will hear those longed for words from the lips of our Lord: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Robert J. Lloyd

*No man is an island entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main;
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
As well as if a promontory were,
As any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in Mankind;
And therefore never send to know
For whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.*

John Donne

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

(Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.
Three months is preferable.)

OCTOBER 2012

- 5-7 Midwest Christadelphian Young Couples Weekend** will be held at the Garland Resort in Michigan. The purpose of the weekend is to help couples grow and develop in the Truth by drawing on the wisdom, comfort and encouragement of the Scriptures. The content of the weekend is geared toward finding balance between family, ecclesia, work etc., with additional focus on raising a godly family and relationships with extended family. There is an informational power point presentation available for download on www.mcycw.com. Contact Annalee Cooper registration@mcycw.com
- 5-7 Washington, DC** Music Study weekend. Theme: "Make the Voice of His Praise to be Heard!". Study leader will be Bro. Phil Munday (Bournemouth Winton, UK). Please join us for an uplifting weekend of studies, song, and praise, based around glorifying God in our music. Friday evening, 7:30pm, Baltimore hall. Saturday and Sunday, Washington DC ecclesial chapel. Contact Bro. David Perry dperry1@gmail.com 410-303-8632.
- 6-7 Atlanta Area, GA** Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON).
- 6-7 Sussex, NB** Thanksgiving Gathering. Speaker Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD).
- 13-14 Echo Lake, NJ** Fall Study weekend. The speaker is Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and his subject is "Promises of the Kingdom".
- 20 Barrie, ON** Fall Study day. The theme is, "Modern Challenges for 21st Century Disciples". Subtitles will be "In the world", "In the State", and "In the Ecclesia". For more information please contact Bro. Bruce Abelby 519-925-5297 or bnb69abel@hotmail.com.
- 27 New England Little Disciples Gathering** a day of Bible study and activities on Peter for children Pre-K to 7th Grade. Location is Barton Center, N. Oxford, MA. Contact www.nelittledisciples.com email nelittledisciples@hotmail.com.

NOVEMBER 2012

- 9-11 Brothers' Weekend** at Hidden Acres, New Hamburg, ON. An excellent opportunity to stimulate faith and build brotherly love through which our families and ecclesias can be strengthened; all for the glory of God. Bro Ron Hicks (Washington DC). Theme: "Get Wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." For information Bro Nathan Badger 519-568-7830 or email natejbadger@gmail.com.
- 10-11 Largo/Orlando/Sarasota, FL** Study Weekend. Speaker Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX). Theme: "As A Man Thinketh In His Heart." Lunch will be provided both Saturday and Sunday. Contact: Bro. Walt Dodrill/Largo at waltdodrill@msn.com or call 727-410-0896.
- 10-11 Pittsburgh, PA** CYC Study Weekend. Bro. Everett Muniz (Paris Ave, OH) will be speaking on "Holy Living in Perilous Times". Contact Sis. Becca Pommer at (724) 757-8582 or pghecclesia@gmail.com.
- 10-11 Victoria, BC** Fall Study Weekend. "Defining the Household" by Bro. Wesley Butler (Vancouver, BC), Bro. Marc Hunter (Saanich Peninsula, BC), and Bro. Simon Snobelen (Vancouver, BC). For further information contact csnobelen@csll.ca.

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060)

Periodicals postage paid at Glendora, California and at additional mailing offices.

Send address corrections to: The Tidings • P.O. Box 530696 • Livonia, MI 48153-0696

23-25 Washington, DC Family Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, Westminster, MD. Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will lead us in classes entitled "The Pattern of the Tabernacle". Weekend fee is \$60. A \$20 deposit is required with registration. Deadline is November 12. Mail registrations to Bro. Dave Fertig, 9703 Schmidt Dr., Burke, VA 22015. For forms or information, phone 703-644-6311 or e-mail Bro. Dave at Hashawha@gmail.com.

25 Ann Arbor, MI Thanksgiving Gathering at Ann Arbor Holiday Inn, 3600 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105. Memorial Service 11am and Lecture 2pm. Lunch will be provided. Speaker: Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD).

DECEMBER 2013

29-Jan 5 Texas Youth Conference at T4C near Freestone, TX. The Texas Youth Conference is a Bible Study Conference for young Christadelphian adults who are between the ages of 17 and 35. Baptized members under the age of 17 may attend. For registration and other information please see our web site at www.texasyouthconference.com.

FEBRUARY 2013

24-Mar 1 Palm Springs Bible School. The speakers at this year's school will be Bro. Stephen Palmer (Cardiff, Wales) and Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). The school offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's Word and enjoy the fellowship of other brethren and sisters. To register, please contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau at Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.